

NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

MAY 18, 2015

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m., on May 18, 2015, at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Commission Members Present: Randall Bradley, Neil Bryant, Tom Davis, Otistene Smith, Vicki Stephens and Bruce Waller. Charles Jones had to work.

Staff Members Present: Jan Eberle-Wilkins, Jason Rhodes, Tina Worrell, Jeff Caplinger, Steve Ralston and Paula Jones.

Others Present: Sandeep Sachidanandan, Gokul Naidu and Bill Trousdale.

Financial Report – First Quarter of 2015: Mr. Waller reported that revenue received is not reflected on the financial report and there is no explanation for this. Staff is doing a good job keeping expenses down as well as can be expected at this point.

Utility Cost Report – First Quarter of 2015: Tina Worrell stated that good weather and rain have helped keep utility costs down.

Disposition of Minutes: Mrs. Stephens presented minutes of the April 20, 2015, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and April 20, 2015, Parks and Recreation Commission public hearing.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to accept these minutes as presented. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absentees: Mrs. Stephens asked that a motion be made to excuse Mr. Jones from this meeting.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to excuse Mr. Jones. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers: Mr. Waller made a motion to table this item until the next regularly scheduled commission meeting. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub-CATCH Agreement: Jeff Caplinger said that the Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub would like to set up an agreement with Parks and Recreation to be able to utilize the Burns Park Cricket pitches on a regular basis. Tennis-ball Cricket is a variation of Cricket in that it utilizes a softer ball, a small field (100 yard oval vs. 180 yard oval), and fewer players (10 instead of 11).

The Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub would pay \$15 per unique player to utilize one (1) Cricket pitch on Saturday mornings for practice from 8:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. during July through November 2015. Currently, they have 43 members made up of adults and children. At times there will be conflicts with other events, such as soccer tournaments, which would have precedence over the Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub's use.

Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub-CATCH Agreement (continued): The Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub will rotate fields as required, upgrade the two (2) pitches with new indoor/outdoor carpet and will only move goals, bleachers and benches with written permission from Parks and Recreation. Items moved by the Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub will be moved back by this group to their original location after their event. An agreement similar to what is used for other associations has been written and set up for the Tennis-ball Cricketers group.

Staff has met with the Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub and the additional written requests have been discussed and incorporated into the attached agreement.

Paula Jones said she agreed with the agreement form.

Mr. Waller said that this group needs to make sure that items they move will be moved back into their proper place after their event.

Mr. Caplinger said this agreement will be brought back to the commission in November 2015, for 2016 renewal consideration.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to approve this agreement with the Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Stephens asked that the state parks grant request be moved to this time of the meeting and the commission agreed.

State Parks Grant Request: Mr. Caplinger stated that staff is recommending that the department proceed on doing this year's Arkansas State Parks Outdoor Recreation Grant request for Burns Park. Plans are to add Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility upgrades and improvements. Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility is a high priority of the Arkansas State Parks, and was requested in the public outreach meetings. This grant request is a continuance of Burns Park grants. The department will pay \$150,000 to a \$300,000 grant. The work will be turnkey if possible and budgeted that way.

Areas to address are listed below with possible additions and revisions:

- Upgrade playground surfacing material in (2) play areas at the Caboose Playground
- Upgrade (2) restrooms to meet American's with Disability Act accessibility requirements ((1) west of tennis, and the other at Eldor Johnson Pavilion)
- Add accessible walkways to access the upgraded restrooms as needed
- Add accessible walkway from the Covered Bridge parking lot to the Covered Bridge and lower bridge
- Add accessible parking areas at the Roosevelt Horton Pavilion (formerly #8) and Pavilion #12
- Add accessible shooting area and walkways to targets at archery
- Add fence at archery
- Add accessible playground at youth baseball
- Add accessible picnic areas

Cost for the entire project would be approximately \$300,000. Federal dollars of \$150,000 would be matched with city funds, in-kind labor and materials.

State Parks Grant Request (continued): Mr. Waller asked if the department has \$150,000 available for this.

Mr. Caplinger said this amount is included in the 2016 budget request that the commission will be reviewing. The commission's vote to approve this request and the budget will give staff the authorization to proceed with writing the grant. Other aspects and specifics of this grant will come back before the commission at a later date before the grant is submitted.

Mrs. Worrell said that the grant has not yet been awarded.

Mr. Bryant asked if this grant would cover the public requests for American's with Disability Act playground accessibility.

Mr. Caplinger said yes, there are American's with Disability Act accessibility items listed for this grant money, but the exact locations are not yet addressed.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to grant this request to pursue. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing Requests for 2016: Mrs. Worrell presented a summary of all the public hearing requests including those that were received in writing prior to the meetings. Also included were approximately five (5) years of requested needs made by the public and staff prior to 2015. Neither of the lists is prioritized, but is shown by either facility, requested individuals or organization. Staff is requesting review and input on possible requests or projects the commission feels should be considered for funding. Once these comments are received, staff will prioritize the list and return to the commission at the next regularly scheduled meeting for final acceptance. There will be approximately \$1.3 million dollars available in 2016.

The Arkansas Tennis Association has offered to give \$45,000 toward their (Arkansas Tennis Association) requests, which includes roof, new heating unit, and court resurfacing. Mr. Rhoads has tried to contact the skateboarders to organize as an association, but without success.

Mr. Bryant said that the Burns Park Tennis Center needs courts 7, 10, 20 and 21 resurfaced properly for the upcoming tournament. He is asking that this request be made a priority.

Mr. Waller asked that staff prioritize the public and the staff requests with the tennis courts being a priority, then bring back to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Mrs. Worrell agreed.

Parks and Recreation Staff Needs for 2016: Mrs. Worrell presented a list of five (5) year requested needs for the Parks and Recreation divisions.

Tina Worrell requested the following for **Recreation and Funland:**

- City-Wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Administration)
- Appliances for the Blue Room Kitchen (North Little Rock Community Center)
- Tablets and Point-of-Sale Equipment (for concessions)
- Fitness Center Upgrades (North Little Rock Community Center)

Parks and Recreation Staff Needs for 2016 (continued) – Recreation and Funland:

- New or Slightly Used Ride (Funland)
- New Computers (four (4) recreation centers)
- 15-Passenger Van (replaces 1999 van used for program transportation)
- Technology Equipment (LCD projectors and screens for four (4) recreation center meeting rooms)
- Message Centers for Fields (to post field information, league and tournament schedules, etc.)
- Crossover Sport Utility Vehicle (to replace the old Ranger Sport Utility Vehicle)
- New Community and Aquatic Facility (indoor/outdoor aquatics facility in Burns Park)
- Renovate Small Meeting/Computer Room (Sherman Park Recreation Center)
- Remodel Kitchen in Large Meeting Room and add Ice Maker (North Little Rock Community Center)
- Renovate Men's Restroom (North Heights Recreation Center)
- Remodel Restrooms in Large Meeting Room to make American's with Disability Act Accessible (North Little Rock Community Center)
- Upgrade Pool Building (Glenview Recreation Center)

Jeff Caplinger requested the following for **Special Projects:**

- \$150,000 Outdoor Recreation Grant match (American's with Disability Act accessibility improvement to Burns Park restrooms, playgrounds, general use areas, etc.)
- Mule (for Park Ranger to replace older one)
- 4-Wheel Drive Vehicle (to replace 2006 Dodge Caravan)

Steve Ralston requested the following for the **Burns Park Golf:**

- New Covers for the Back 9 Championship Course (to replace 35-year-old covers)
- New Fairway/Greens Sprayer (to replace 10-year-old sprayer with problems)
- Cart Path Work at the Championship Course
- Finish Updates to the Clubhouse and Renovate the Men's Restroom. The mayor may contribute \$5,000 to \$6,000 to this project.
- New Sod around Greens/Fairways (to continue project started and improve playability)
- (2) New Computers (to replace outdated computer and add (1) to front)
- Contract Tree Work

Jason Rhodes requested the following for **Park Maintenance:**

- (1) Small Tractor and Finish Mower
- (2) John Deere Zero Turn Mowers (replace old damaged/worn mower at Maintenance 2)
- (1) 1/2 ton 4x4 Vehicle (replace 1997 damaged/worn truck at baseball)
- (1) 1/2 ton 4x4 Vehicle (replace 1997 damaged/worn truck at soccer)
- (1) 1/2 ton 4x2 Vehicle (replace 2000 damaged/worn truck at soccer)
- (1) 16' Dump Truck (for maintenance)
- (1) 7-gang Reel Mower (replace old damaged/worn mower)
- Replace (18) new Disc Golf Baskets
- Update Restrooms at Baseball Senior Field 2
- Remove Bleacher Cover at Baseball Field 2
- Replace Field Lights at the Dejanis Ballfield
- Install New Roofs on Pavilions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, Dr. Ratcliff, Lookout, Shelby Smith and Louis Gershner

Parks and Recreation Staff Needs for 2016 (continued): Mr. Rhodes said they are looking for a way to make the park signs more uniform and maintenance free.

Mrs. Stephens commended the staff for thinking ahead and said they have done an outstanding job. She said she understands the importance of a master plan, but does not consider it a priority.

Mr. Waller suggested having graduate students at Russellville Tech look at doing the master plan.

Mrs. Worrell stated that if there were no other recommendations from the commission, a final staff request list will be brought to the next regularly scheduled commission meeting.

Director Reports: Mrs. Worrell presented director reports for April 2015 and reported:

- Park maintenance staff has done a great job on maintaining and repairing **areas after the flood.**
- **The youth baseball tournament** was played last weekend.
- Shep has done a good job keeping the **geese** away.
- **Pools** will open this coming weekend.

Mr. Rhodes reported that the **flood waters** will rise again May 19 and 20, 2015.

Mr. Bryant asked if the **soccer fields** are ready for the tournament.

Mr. Rhodes said the staff is ready and they are working to get sod down on May 20 and 21, 2015.

Mr. Ralston reported that **golf revenue** had increased last month due to good weather, and they hope to have flood areas cleaned up within ten (10) days. His staff has done a good job in cleaning up the course in order to have a golf tournament.

Mr. Waller said that the Arkansas State Soccer Association players should be made aware of the **footgolf** course when they arrive for registration.

Mr. Rhodes said he has already notified the Arkansas State Soccer Association and this organization will forward the information to coaches and parents.

Mrs. Stephens suggested that Advertising and Promotion get involved in this notice.

Mr. Caplinger reported that 75 **goose eggs** were added and Shep has made a big difference in keeping the **geese** away.

Mrs. Stephens said she appreciated the **recreation director's report** and enjoyed reading it.

Mrs. Smith said that one (1) of the staff employees is off on extended medical leave.

Mr. Rhodes said that Alan Gourley, former park maintenance employee, had died.

Calendar of Events: Mrs. Stephens stated that the next commission agenda deadline is Tuesday, June 2, 2015, at 2:00 p.m. Any items need to be called in by that date and time to the Parks and Recreation Administration Office.

Calendar of Events: (continued) The next regularly scheduled commission meeting is Monday, June 15, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. in the North Little Rock Community Center.

Mrs. Smith said she will be working out of town on that date.

Adjournment: Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to adjourn at 5:39 p.m. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments: Mrs. Stephens opened the meeting for public comments.

Bill Trousdale said that Burns Park was one of the first back-to-back two-hole disc golf courses in the country. He agrees that the Burns Park course is a venue for the parks system and it belongs to the people. A lot of groups use it.

Mrs. Stephens said she does not mind that people stop by and throw their Frisbees. However, she does have a problem with the course being used to generate revenue for an individual to put on a tournament when the department gets no benefit from it. Yet, the department is being asked to maintain and spend money to improve the baskets. It is the taxpayer's that built and paid for the course. A task force or organization needs to be formed for this program in order for it to be maintained better. She asked Mr. Trousdale that either he or a representative meet with Bob Rhoads and Jeff Caplinger regarding this organization. When an agreement is worked out, Mr. Rhoads will bring this to the commission for a vote.

As a commission member, she will not approve to spend money on a program that will benefit someone personally with financial gain. As long as the course is being used for recreation purposes and the department has the money, that is one thing. However, she will not vote to spend the money that a person is asking for, for him to bring in three (3) annual tournaments when the department gets nothing from it. If the recreational people want to hold a tournament and put money back into the program to upgrade the baskets, she has no problem with that. She will not support someone holding a tournament, using the department's equipment and land, to benefit themselves.

Mrs. Worrell said that Mr. Rhoads met with Doug Trantham, and Mr. Trantham is filing a Special Events Application form for an upcoming tournament. Mr. Rhoads wants a committee or temporary task force formed to get an idea what the members want for the course.

Mr. Trousdale said he will make plans to meet with Mr. Rhoads.

Submitted by,

Otistene Smith, Secretary